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## GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE OF THE CASE</b>	StartMinds: A Platform to Guide Entrepreneurial Students to Real Entrepreneurship
<b>SALES PITCH</b>	How to create a platform to coach entrepreneurial students to actual entrepreneurship
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	UC Leuven-Limburg
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Belgium
<b>DATE</b>	January 2017
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Annelies Schrooten, Ilse Fraussen, Tin van den Putte, Patricia Huion and Jose Tummers
<b>NATURE OF INTERACTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration in R&amp;D</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Academic mobility</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Student mobility</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Commercialisation of R&amp;D results in science</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong learning</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum development and delivery</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Governance</li></ul>
<b>SUPPORTING MECHANISM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic instrument</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Structural instrument or approach</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Operational activity</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework condition</li></ul>



# CASE STUDY PROFILE

## 1. SUMMARY

The baseline of UC Leuven-Limburg is Moving Minds: we want to put our students and staff members into movement. Some of the students put their entrepreneurial mindset into practice by starting their own business. These entrepreneurial students come from various programs. However, as most higher education institutions, UC Leuven-Limburg insufficiently supports those students to successfully start their own business during their education. To bridge this gap between entrepreneurial skills and true entrepreneurship, StartMinds has been created. This is a platform to coach entrepreneurial students to actual entrepreneurship. Above all, StartMinds wants to inspire, coach and connect.

## 2. BACKGROUND

It is generally acknowledged that entrepreneurship is very important for a country's economic growth. It is vital to promote a positive image of 'becoming an entrepreneur', reducing the fear of failure and the associated stigma, and encouraging creativity and risk-taking so that starting a business is seen as a very attractive and worthwhile choice of occupation. However, that is undoubtedly the determinant over which the government has least control. Besides, changing the culture is a long-term process. Stimulating entrepreneurship therefore requires a determined approach via various channels, including the media and higher education.

UC Leuven-Limburg, a Flemish University of Applied Sciences, organizes 18 bachelor programs in the domains of teacher education, management, technology, and health care. The baseline "Moving Minds" determines the view on teaching and working at UC Leuven-Limburg, where creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset are key concepts in every curriculum. The graduates entering the labor market are not only highly qualified professionals with domain-specific skills, but also professionals geared to constantly adapt their mindset and behavior in a pro-active way to an ever and faster changing world and work field. To deliver this versatile profile to the labor market, the learning activities do not only focus on the mere hard skills but also on soft skills, which are ineluctable to identify and take up the (future) challenges in their later professional career.

For a specific segment of students, the moving minds philosophy does not end here. They want to put their entrepreneurial mindset into practice by starting their own business. These entrepreneurial students come from various programs. However, as most higher education institutions, UC Leuven-Limburg insufficiently supports those students to successfully start their own business. To bridge this gap between entrepreneurial skills and true entrepreneurship, StartMinds has been created. This is a platform to coach entrepreneurial students to actual entrepreneurship during their education.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

StartMinds has been created to realize the following objectives:

- ▶ Inspiring students to identify their passions and what will drive them in their future career.
- ▶ Creating a platform to optimally support students dreaming of starting their own business
- ▶ Delivering graduates who can successfully start their business upon graduation.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITY

StartMinds was set up to stimulate intra- and entrepreneurship at UC Leuven-Limburg. This initiative was conceived by a small team of lecturers dealing with initiatives to stimulate an entrepreneurial attitude. Given the importance of multidisciplinary in this project, it has been presented to the boards of the different faculties as well as to the board of directors. This way, a broad support was created to implement StartMinds and to embed it in all sections of the institution.



## IMPLEMENTATION & FUNDING

### 5. STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

StartMinds wants to (i) stimulate students with an entrepreneurial mindset to consider entrepreneurship, (ii) coach entrepreneurial students throughout the journey taking them from a (vague) idea to the actual start-up of their own business, (iii) and connect them with initiatives of business partners.

The activities of StartMinds are centered around three key notions, which are ineluctable for candidate entrepreneurs: inspire, coach and meet/network.

To **inspire** students low-level initiatives are organized. The main goal is to make the participating students aware of the possibility to start their own business upon graduation (rather than becoming an employee) and to grow the awareness about their entrepreneurial potential. To this end, a great variety of initiatives are organized, such as lunches with alumni who started their own business, entrepreneurial testimonials at job days, the possibility to run a small business project instead of doing an internship.

Once the students with an entrepreneurial profile have been singled out, they are **coached** and the process leading to the start of their business is intensively followed up. The support does not only consist of the creation of a business plan, but also encompasses practical aspects, such as the administrative process, finding financial resources, finding a physical place to run the business. In this stage, students are not only coached by their lecturers, but they are also offered StartMinds coupons to get consultancy from business partners of UC Leuven-Limburg. Finally, special facilities are provided to students starting their own business, such as a working place and the status of student-entrepreneur, which allows them to organize their study program in flexible way.

The final key notions of StartMinds are **connecting** and **network(ing)**. For entrepreneurs, a network is of the utmost importance. To this end, within UC Leuven-Limburg a network is created where entrepreneurial students and student-entrepreneurs from different study domains can meet, work, exchange ideas, etc. That way, they create a learning network where they learn from each other and cross-fertilize each other's business ideas. This requires the creation of informal meeting places and workplaces.

### 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Some quantitative indicators related to the project are monitored, such as;

- the number of students we inspire through inspirational talks,
- the number of student-entrepreneurs,
- the number of students who obtain a business management certificate to start their own business,
- the number of active partners involved in the project

At the end of the project period, the team will perform a 360° evaluation to get input of all stakeholders, in order to better know the needs of student-entrepreneurs and to figure out how they can better be served with seminars, expert coaching, location, etc.

### 7. SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

Stimulating entrepreneurship will become more and more relevant and the project will be scaled up during the next years. Hereby we seek long-term collaboration with the key stakeholders in the region.

Our vision is to remain an 'Entrepreneurial University of Applied Sciences' where we stimulate intrapreneurship as well as entrepreneurship at every faculty amongst every staff member and student'. We are looking to enlarge the coaching team in order to offer a better follow-up to more students.

Hugging points will be set up to create a space where students can meet each other as well as the StartMinds coaches. That way, a physical platform will be created where entrepreneurial students get to know the business ideas and experiences of student-colleagues, share ideas and experiences, etc.

### 8. COSTS

Major cost elements are:

Staff: +/-50,000 euro/year – 0.7 FTE coaches

Cost of investment: €10,000 / hugging spot

### 9. FUNDING

The two types of funding channeled in the project are:

- *Direct funding*

European Fund of Regional Development (EFRO)

- *Indirect funding*  
Financial and accounting partners (who accept StartMinds coupons): SBB, E&Y, A&B partners, Fiscadvies, ING, Xerius who provide free services (e.g. StartMinds coupons) in exchange for exposure.



## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### 10. OUTCOMES

Concrete outcomes of the case are:

- Creation of a dynamic entrepreneurial network with regional partners who stimulate entrepreneurship. Collaborative initiatives are set up to stimulate entrepreneurship amongst students.
- Organization of accessible inspiration sessions with student-entrepreneurs on the one hand and alumni-entrepreneurs and business partners on the other hand.
- Increased visibility of entrepreneurial competencies within the university of applied sciences.
- Increased recognition of UC Leuven-Limburg as entrepreneurial partner
- All students will be offered the opportunity to flavor an entrepreneurial experience, at the large sense of the word, during his/her education.
- Multidisciplinary collaboration is stimulated within the University of Applied Sciences.
- Graduates are highly qualified professionals, who not only excel in hard skills but who also have the necessary soft skills and attitudes to be geared for the future.
- Increased number of student-entrepreneurs (n =30/year)
- Increased diversity of the students who enroll in the multidisciplinary course module "How to start your own business". This academic year 40% of the participating students were no Business or Management students.
- Increased number of students starting their own business upon graduation (increase of 20%).

### 11. IMPACTS

The direct and indirect impact of the project on the stakeholder groups are as follows:

- Increased entrepreneurial attitude amongst staff members and students
- A growing number of student-entrepreneurs who effectively start their own business during their studies or upon graduation
  - Visibility of entrepreneurial initiatives on campus
  - Activation and strengthening of network of partners stimulating entrepreneurship
  - (Visual) embedment of entrepreneurial skills in curricula (not only in Business and Management programs)

## 12. INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

A number of local and regional stakeholders benefit from the case:

- ▶ Forum entrepreneurial higher education, a network of Flemish Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences
- ▶ Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Vlajo, an organization to stimulate entrepreneurial skills amongst youngster in primary, secondary and higher education
- ▶ Regional organizations supporting start-ups: Leuven Mindgate, Limburg StartUp (LSU)
- ▶ KBC start-it
- ▶ Incubators, where graduates can expand their business after the start-up
- ▶ Cronos, an association supporting technological start-ups
- ▶ Financial and accounting partners (who accept StartMinds coupons): SBB, E&Y, A&B partners, Fiscadvies, ING, Xerius who provide free services (e.g. StartMinds coupons) in exchange for exposure.

## 13. AWARDS / RECOGNITION

No official recognition or award was obtained for StartMinds.



# LESSONS LEARNED

## 14. PRIMARY CHALLENGES

It took time to create the right mindset within UC Leuven-Limburg. Stimulating intrapreneurship is teamwork. As a consequence, ideally all lecturers are involved in this endeavor. It's still an ongoing process; we work with best practices and we try to involve a lot of lecturers. Creating a flexible mindset is a work in progress.

## 15. SUCCESS FACTORS

We list the critical factors that determine the success of this project:

- ▶ Staff members are given a lot of autonomy to imbed this intrapreneurial approach in their course modules.
- ▶ It is crucial to have a motivated and dynamic team of staff members who inspire each other. These staff members need to be flexible, display intrapreneurial/entrepreneurial skills and be able to step out of their 'comfort zone'.
- ▶ Students have to be intensively coached and guided to optimize their learning experience in entrepreneurial education. This coaching and guidance must allow students to claim ownership of their projects.
- ▶ A good cooperation with the stakeholders: build trust, have enough commitment from different parties and strive toward win-win situations.
- ▶ Communication of StartMinds within UC Leuven-Limburg.
- ▶ Media that promote a positive image of 'becoming an entrepreneur'.

## 16. TRANSFERABILITY

This case contains important learnings for universities and universities of applied sciences that wish to stimulate intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship within their organization. The following main aspects of StartMinds can be straightforwardly transferred to other faculties and institutions:

- ▶ Setting up an entrepreneurial community
- ▶ Stimulating intrapreneurship, amongst lecturers as well as students
- ▶ Stimulating entrepreneurship
- ▶ Coaching entrepreneurial students

However, in order to maximize the impact and to guarantee success, it is necessary to deploy a clear institutional framework to support the necessary initiatives, financially as well as logistically.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

### 17. PUBLICATIONS / ARTICLES

No previous publications are available.

### 18. LINKS

[www.ucll.be/startminds](http://www.ucll.be/startminds)

[www.facebook.com/startminds](https://www.facebook.com/startminds)

### 19. KEYWORDS

entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial competences, 21th century skills

### 20. PUBLIC CONTACT DETAILS

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